

Inquiry into the water management of Lower Lakes and Coorong

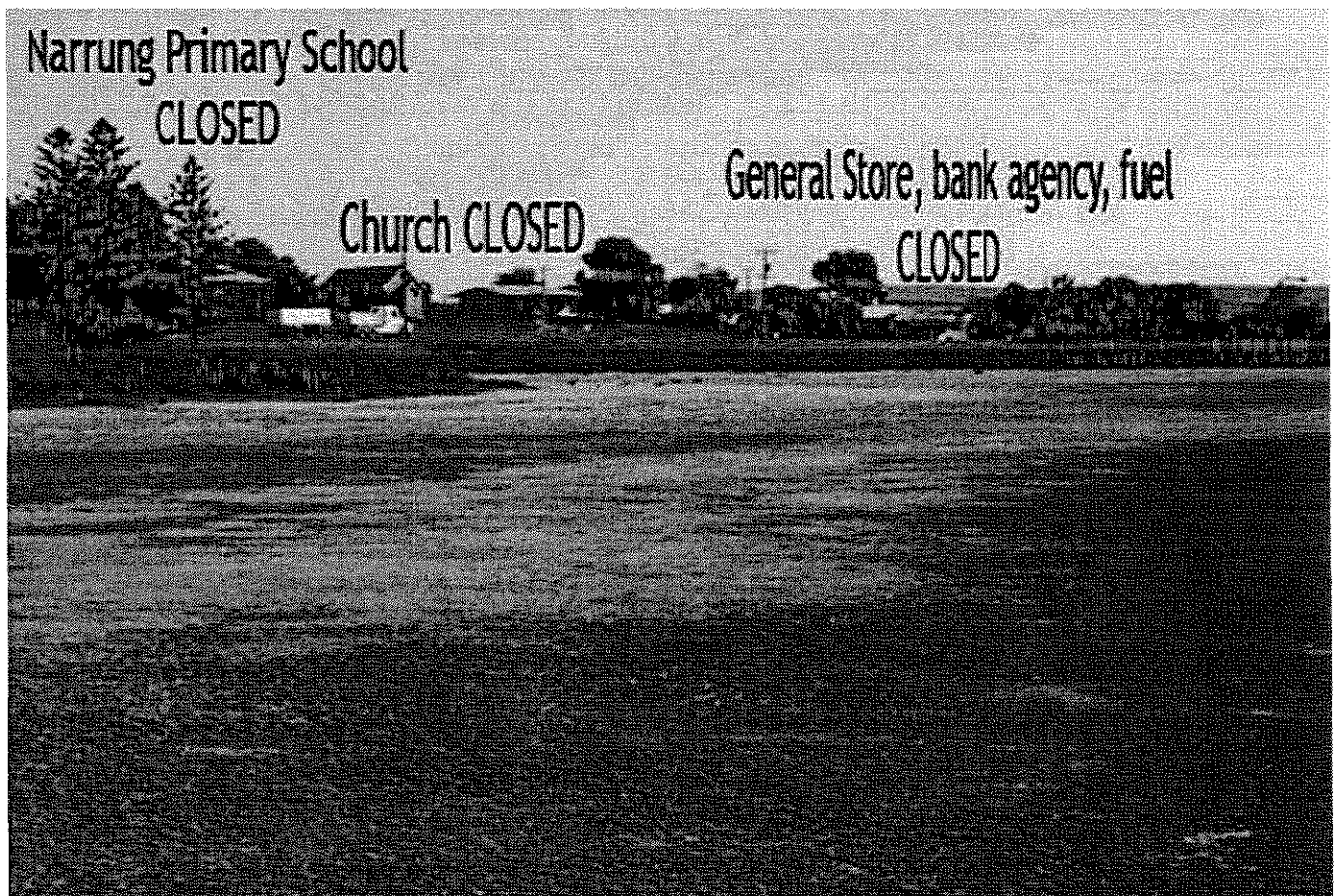
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Submission By Vesper Tjukonai,

Ph:

P:

For the past 12 or so years I have been living as a guest in the Traditional Lands of the Ngarrindjeri on the Narrung Peninsula. I am not an irrigator, but a concerned householder.



Historically, the River has always been prone to drought. It is clear that water-hoarding practices of the waterway over the past two centuries have failed us. FOR A HEALTHY RIVER, IT NEEDS TO FLOW. But the River has been sold off for profit. There is no doubt it cannot sustain current usage. Therefore, I submit, that the Federal Govt needs to:

LISTEN to First Nations whose traditional practice was to ensure that the water quality flowing out of their jurisdiction was as pristine as it was flowing in.

PERMIT human habitation practices along the waterway which are appropriate for the climactic and environmental conditions. PROMOTE Biological Farming practices which take their cues from the local environment, retain soil moisture and therefore reduce reliance on irrigation. BAN the use of agricultural chemicals which reduce soil moisture and promote leaching.

REDUCE upstream water allocations by 30%.

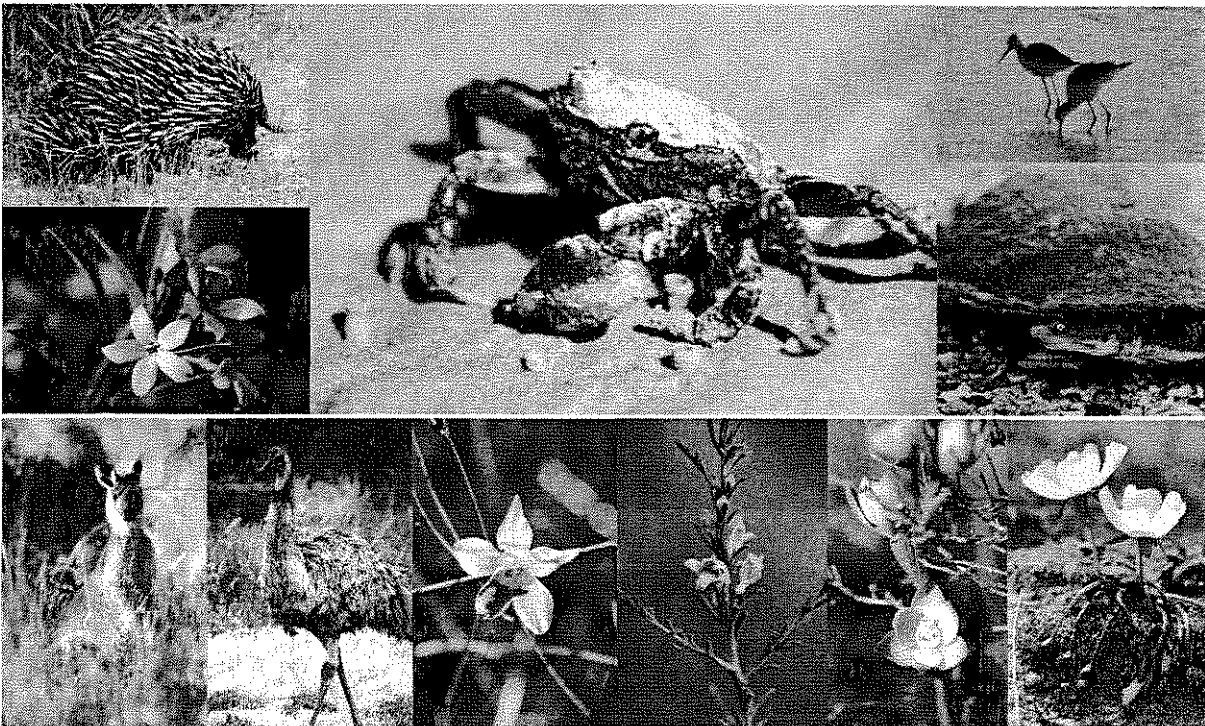
STOP costly interventions that promote water-hoarding. CHANGING the environment to fit our usage does not work: the history of the last two centuries has proven that water-hoarding practices destroy the River and its waterways. Hearing some local irrigators talk, it is likely that the \$50m dollar pipeline to the Narrung Peninsula will promote unsustainable "business as usual" practices. Hearing some Adelaide water-users talk, it is likely to be "business as usual," if a weir is built at Wellington. CHANGING our water-habits to fit the environment is the way to go.

RESTORE flows to the Coorong with its seed-source and habitat of global significance in the hummocks and the estuary region around Kumarangk, heart of the Ngarrindjeri Nation, the lungs and kidneys of the River. AVOID FLOODing the Coorong and Lower Lakes with sea-water. CHANGING the Coorong and Lower Lakes to a sea-water environment is a drastic and costly change: on-going pumping of sea-water into Lake Albert will be required, since tidal flows from the mouth are not strong enough AND prevailing wind patterns in summer blow Lake Albert waters back towards Lake Alexandrina.

SUPPORT our local community through these changes. Since living at Narrung, the general store with its bank agency and petrol pump has closed, the church has closed, the school has closed, and it's likely the local police station and ferry will close. For those who cannot easily travel the 90+km round-trip to the nearest town for shopping, life is tough. People are becoming increasingly vulnerable through isolation. Apart from the Murray Mallee transport scheme only for medical purposes, there is no local transport service. At present support seems available to farm businesses, but not the most vulnerable in the community: the aged, the disabled, and the young.

In 1999 I made a submission to the *Coorong Lower Lakes Ramsar Plan*, [Dept of Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs.] It began: "May the following photos speak for the birds, fish, and other creatures..." I understand that the *Coorong Lower Lakes Ramsar Plan* played only an advisory role on how water-users relate to this globally significant environment. A decade later, lack of managerial action has brought this region again to crisis point. And again I write: May my words and images speak for those who do not have a voice.

A HEALTHY FLOWING RIVER IS GOOD FOR EVERY ONE, INCLUDING our locals...



For my full submission please see:
<http://submissiontowatermanagementinquiry.wordpress.com/>